

October 14, 2004

Diane Noda
Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2943 Portola Rd., Suite B
Ventura, CA 93003

Dear Diane,

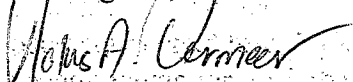
Thank you for forwarding on the recommendations from the Island Fox Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) and analysis provided by Task Force 3 (TF3) with respect to releases of island foxes this fall. As per your request, this letter details how The Nature Conservancy will proceed in implementing those recommendations for which we are responsible, the actions we will take, and implementation timelines.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) acknowledges and supports the recommendation of the RCG and TF 3 that there be no releases of captive foxes into the wild on Santa Cruz Island this year. TNC shares the similar concerns that the risk of predation by golden eagles remains too high, and that we are uncertain as to how predation risk may change during the course of the pig eradication program.

To this end, TNC will build additional capacity in the Central Valley of Santa Cruz Island to accommodate the 19 pups that were born into captivity earlier this year. A site visit has already been conducted, jointly by TNC, the National Park Service and the Institute for Wildlife Studies, to scope out the location and configuration for placement of the additional fox pen facilities. Placement of the new facilities takes into account considerations for the need for a minimum 10m buffer of separation between pens, perimeter fence, suitable terrain, fire break, and containment within the identified site boundaries. Pen materials have been purchased by TNC and are being transported out to the Island. Six full size pens (20 ft x 30 ft), and 2 quarantine pens (10 ft x 20 ft), as per the existing standard for pen construction, will be constructed by TNC by the second week of November 2004. This will provide sufficient captive pen space for the pups born into captivity this year.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (805) 642-0345x504.

Best regards,



Lotus A. Vermeer, Ph.D
Project Director, Santa Cruz Island
The Nature Conservancy of California

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